4: Schram M-5 (1911-1922) 1957 AE9 Monguor AE9

pounds of butter boil in another caldron. The Living Buddha, in full attire with the mitre of the five Dyhana Buddhas on his head, squats on a felt in front of a table, with dishes containing spelt, rice, spices, and holy water. He recites the prayers, with a curtain between him and the oven, lest the sight of the burning corpse might desecrate his eyes. He orders a lama to throw the blessed spelt and spices on the burning corpse and puts some butter into a small ladle held by the lama, who pours it on the corpse.

When the rite is finished the group prostrates itself and cries to the smoking corpse for the last time, "Do not harm the family," and returns. All of them jump over a fire built before the courtyard, wash their hands, and rub them over a long knife used to cut straw. Noodles without meat are prepared for all of them, and they say five-hundred Om Manis. The lama receives his alms (always in an odd number) and returns to the monastery. The horse of the deceased father or the valuable headdress of the deceased mother will be brought to the monastery with a couple of pieces of best clothes to be sold by the lamas, and to have prayers said according to the value of the sale of the items.[38] The clothes carried by the horse are to be put on the saddle with the collar and arms on the left side; a horse is mounted on the right side.

In the meantime, the sons and sons-in-law have tended the oven and closed the four openings. After three days the members of the family and relatives open the oven, pick out the bones with chopsticks and put them into the small coffin prepared for this. The remaining fragments of bones and ashes are gathered up in the skirts of the gown and scattered on the mountain. It is said that sheep are very fond of such bones. The cremation must not be performed in cultivated areas, it has to be done in deep valleys or lonely spots. Every year after the shamanist springtime feast, this prohibition is expressly announced. The sons and sons-in-law bury the small coffin in their fields or near the oven, and make a small tumulus. While the sons are kneeling before the tumulus, the sons-in-law and married and unmarried daughters bring some earth a couple of times in the skirts of their gowns, and spread it on top of the tumulus. Paper is burned, a lamp made of dough is lit, libations and prostrations are made and lamentations are uttered. The coffin will be dug up again the following April, on the feast of the worship of the ancestors buried in the family cemetery, and the name of the deceased will be noted on the genealogical register (see Part I: 71). After the tumulus rite is performed

[38] A similar custom is encountered among the Mongols: Serruys, *op. cit.*, 137. The barbarians (i.e., the Mongols of Inner Mongolia around 1600) invited lamas to recite prayers for the dead for seven days. They gave to the lamas in remuneration the best horse, which the deceased loved most; his best clothes and his coat of armor, and all the oxen and horses which the family received from friends and relatives as mourning gifts. See also Van Oost, *op. cit.*, 126, and Kervyn, *op. cit.*, 112.

/The Monguors/

N *563 M 614 565 554 [466] into another lord's service. If they attempted to do so, the punishment was death. After the great rebellion of the Moslems (1862-1878), however, the military power of the Monguor gradually declined. No T'u-ssu after this time really wielded any true power.

The principle of corvee, to which the Monguor were still liable, is founded on the vassalage which previously bound the nomads to the "service" of the chief. Although they neither tilled the soil nor paid taxes, nonetheless they were real vassals.

N *563 M 614 217 565 The register of all noble families is kept at the seat of the T'u-ssu. Even the daughters, and the families into which they marry, are noted. A noble is also entered in the book of genealogies. However, the names of unmarried sons are not inscribed, because they presumably have not produced sons for the clan.

N *563 M 174 565 M [554] When the Monguor first settled in their frontier territory and began the transition from nomadism to agriculture, there was probably considerable social distance between the commoners and the nobles. With settled life and the increasing dominance of agriculture, noble families, like commoner families, became increasingly dependent on their ability to manage their own farms. Local prestige was determined more and more by wealth and ability, and class became secondary.

N *563 M 621 622 565 The Monguor village consists of a group of families living in a well-defined territory and subject to the immediate authority of the village chief. All villagers till the soil, and the population is large or small according to the fertility of the soil and the extent of the pastures. Nobles and commoners live in the same kind of house, and they gain their livelihood in the same manner. Therefore, their substance and wealth are not sharply differentiated.

N *563 M 596 [421] [561] [595] Until 1922 the extended Monguor family was a patrilineal, patrilocal family under the authority of the grandfather, or the great-grandfather if he survived. No family usually exceeded four generation. Property and wealth were owned collectively, but authority over the property was unequally concentrated in the senior generation. Polygamy in Monguor society is decidedly an economic question, since polygamy does not go well with residence in a common courtyard. The breakup of an extended family is visibly symbolized when one of the nuclear families sets up its own kitchen. The position of

M [428] chief or head of the family normally passes by primogeniture to the eldest son of the first wife of the previous head. In every family, rich or poor, noble or commoner, the head of the family is also the religious chief, the family administrator, and the family representative in dealing with higher authorities outside the family. In his administration of the family, he has authority over all the community property. The breakdown of the extended family usually

M [182] [768] [428] takes place when the grandfather dies. It is very seldom that his surviving sons remain united under the authority of the eldest son. More commonly, the sons divide the property and "build their own kitchens.